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ABSTRACT

A study based on a randomly-selected sample of 41 Ohio State University faculty was conducted to examine faculty member's receipt and use of feedback about instruction-related activities. The faculty was also asked to identify issues relevant to evaluation practices and improvement of instruction. Faculty reported relatively little effort directed toward instructional improvement or faculty development. Faculty generally had little contact with colleagues regarding their teaching, courses, or their evaluation. Course structure, examinations, and teaching methods, in general, received little purposeful review other than faculty-initiated student ratings of teaching. Information is provided on faculty use of various feedback mechanisms, including promotion/tenure reviews, student evaluations of instruction, analysis of student performance on tests, and in-class observation by peers. In addition to a detailed examination of the findings and samples of faculty comments, implications of current practices on instructional quality within doctoral-granting institutions are discussed. Suggestions for action to improve current instructional evaluation practices are also offered. Appended are a one-page faculty background questionnaire and definitions of codes used to classify faculty interview data. (SW)

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INSTRUCTIONAL EVALUATION FOR DEVELOPMENT/IMPROVEMENT: FACT OR FICTION BASED ON A CASE STUDY OF FACULTY PRACTICES?

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, March 31-April 4, 1985.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Within colleges and universities, a major aspect of faculty and organizational performance centers around providing undergraduate and graduate instruction. Instruction is a major mission of all colleges and universities; even in our research universities, faculty report spending a majority of their time in instruction-related activities (Hildebrand et al., 1971; Baldridge et al., 1978; Ladd and Lipsett, 1978). In addition to group and individualized teaching, these instructional activities include a variety of other tasks such as developing and updating curricula, developing and grading exams, and selecting and preparing course materials.

The locus of these instructional activities is at the individual course and department level. It is also the faculty who play the primary role in developing, designing, and delivering instruction within colleges and universities. It is, therefore, the faculty who receive the most direct and immediate natural feedback about instructional performance.

It has long been recognized that human and organizational behavior is shaped, changed, and sometimes improved through the process of receiving and using feedback. Individuals and organizations behave, or perform, and then acquire new information as a product of performance. New information, or feedback, can then be used to maintain, eliminate or change the original performance. This feedback process occurs both naturally and artificially. In other words, information is acquired as a natural consequence of behavior, but it can also be acquired through mechanisms

specifically designed for the purpose of acquiring information about particular activities.

If instruction within institutions of higher education is to change, adapt, and improve, faculty must acquire meaningful feedback about instructional practices. They need to seek and have available to them both natural and artificial means of acquiring feedback about their instruction-related performance. While individuals and organizations do not always use naturally or artificially acquired performance feedback to change or improve, like biological systems, the more able they are to receive, interpret, and consequently adapt in response to feedback the more likely they are to survive and thrive.

This need for performance feedback raises important questions for persons concerned with instructional quality in our colleges and universities. Some of these questions are:

> How, and to what extent, do faculty acquire information about their instruction-related performance?
>
> Of the feedback available to them, what do faculty value and find useful for improving their instructional practices?
>
> How do faculty use feedback about their teaching and courses?
>
> What, if anything, do faculty change as a result of feedback about their instruction?
>
> Which individual and organizational factors seem to be related to the ways in which faculty seek and use feedback about instruction?

II. A SUMMARY OF RELATED STUDIES

A review of the literature uncovered no studies through which faculty were queried directly regarding the feedback available to them about instruction-related activities and how it is used in improvement activities. The literature does, however, include numerous reports and articles that describe ways in which information about faculty's instruction-related performance is collected and used through institutional faculty evaluation and faculty development programs. It also describes methods and instruments that are available for collecting information about teaching and courses. These include in-class observation techniques, videotaping of classroom teaching, faculty review committees, and student ratings of teachers and courses. Further, there is a plethora of articles and studies on the validity and reliabilty of these various methods, particularly student-rating instruments.

The available literature most closely related to the questions regarding how and to what extent faculty receive feedback about their instruction-related performance is that which describes faculty evaluation and faculty development activities within higher education.

Faculty Evaluation and Faculty Development Programs

Formal evaluation processes--activities through which information is sought and used for the purpose of judging the merit and worth of actions to take or not to take--are examples of artificial feedback mechanisms which can be and have been applied to instructional practices within colleges and universities. In the

last 25 years, formal evaluation of instructional practices has been increasingly used as a part of faculty evaluation and faculty development programs. This trend has been attributed to a complex set of factors. According to Centra (1980), faculty evaluation programs and faculty development programs have increased in incidence and formality for a number of reasons:

> College budgets are tight and many institutions are at or near prescribed limits in the percentage of faculty on tenure. Teachers must now prove that they deserve tenure, forcing institutions to make fine distinctions between generally competent instructors. (p. 2)

> The declining rate of growth has also resulted in less faculty mobility. Colleges can no longer depend on new staff to keep them vital, nor can teachers broaden perspectives by changing jobs. This steady-state condition is being remedied, in part, by teacher evaluation and improvement. (p. 2)

He also cites additional factors which have influenced the trend toward the increased use of faculty evaluation and faculty development programs:

> Additional pressure to upgrade instruction comes from students, parents, and legislators. Students seem less timid in expressing dissatisfaction than they once were, and many parents are not at all sure that the effectiveness of instruction warrants the high costs of college education. Legislators are pressuring public institutions to become more accountable and in a few instances have legislated evaluation requirements. In states such as California they have earmarked funds specifically for instructional improvement. (p. 2)

These complex sets of factors--both internal and external to the university--simply highlight the need for feedback sufficient for informing the faculty and the organization about instructional practices.

Faculty Evaluation Studies

The major studies which have dealt most specifically with

faculty evaluation practices within institutions of higher education employed similar designs and methodologies for their inquiries (Gustad, 1961; Astin and Lee, 1967; Seldin, 1975, 1978, 1984; Boyd and Schietinger, 1976; and Centra, 1977). Using mail surveys and administrators as informants, data were collected from a cross-section of higher education institutions, i.e., 2-year community colleges, 4-year public and private liberal arts colleges, and public and private doctoral-granting universities.

Although the particular items used for collecting information through these different surveys naturally varied, the general line of questioning was similar. The researchers typically inquired as to whether or not faculty performance was formally evaluated, the purposes for conducting faculty evaluations, the kind of and sources of information used in faculty evaluations, and the perceived or ideal weight given to particular kinds and sources of information in evaluative decision-making.

These survey results, spanning over twenty years of institutional practices, reveal several trends related to the evaluation of faculty performance:

- Institutions claim that instructional improvement and development is a primary purpose for collecting information about faculty performance. However, outside of the promotion, tenure, and retention processes there is little description as to how, if, or by whom the information is actually used for improving and developing instructional practices.

- Faculty evaluation practices particular to doctoral-granting institutions are consistently reported as somewhat

different from those operating within other types of higher education institutions. For example, Boyd and Schietinger (1976) report that "the more senior the institution, the more frequent the emphasis on personnel [purposes]; the less senior the institution the more frequent the emphasis on faculty development [purposes] (p.11)." They also found that in master's, bachelor's and two-year institutions academic deans were reported as the principal evaluators, whereas, in doctoral-granting institutions it was department chairs. Centra (1980) reported that "student ratings are [considered] more important in Research and Doctoral-Granting Universities than in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges (p.9)."

- There has been a substantial and growing increase in the reported use of systematic student ratings of instructors and courses within all institution types.

- Students serve as a major, and in some cases the only direct, source from whom information about instructional practices is collected.

- The role that faculty play in reporting information about their own performance has increased over the past decade (Seldin, 1984).

Studies on Faculty Development Programs

In the last several years, many colleges and universities have implemented faculty development programs aimed at improving instructional practices. According to Goldschmid (1978):

> A number of universities have established staff development programs often organized by special units, which have become known under a variety of names, such as higher education advisory and research centers, pedagogical service units and staff or faculty development institutes. By offering a documentation service, courses, workshops, seminars and consultation on teaching, as well as engaging in research on instruction, these units are supposed to provide the impetus for teaching improvement efforts. (p. 233)

Formal faculty development programs can provide faculty and organizations with a variety of means through which they can acquire feedback about instructional performance. These programs have been the focus of survey studies similar to those which dealt with faculty evaluation practices (Miller and Wilson, 1963; Many, Ellis and Abrams, 1969; Eble, 1970, and Centra, 1976).

The most comprehensive of these studies was conducted by Centra (1976). Seven hundred and thirty-four faculty development administrators from doctoral-granting universities, 4-year colleges, and 2-year colleges responded to a mail questionnaire. They were asked to identify the types of faculty development activities operating on their campuses and to estimate the proportion of faculty involved in each. They were further asked to rate how effective they thought each activity was. The activities covered in the questionnaire included a full range of development activities such as seminars, sabbaticals, and grants for materials development. It also included a ten-item section for reporting techniques which are used to assess and provide feedback about instruction. Centra reports that, in general, respondents from the two-year colleges were more likely than four-year colleges and universities to rate analysis and assessment techniques as effective for producing instructional improvement. Since directors of

faculty development programs and not faculty were the informants in this study, the data may not accurately reflect actual use and effectiveness.

In fact, Goldschmid's reports of her experiences with faculty development programs casts serious doubts as to whether data reported by faculty development programs can accurately reflect actual practices of the majority of faculty. She claims that the number of faculty who use the services of development centers represents approximately 1% to 10% of the total number of instructors. Furthermore, both Goldschmid and Centra report that the majority of the teachers who use the services of faculty development programs represent the best and most concerned faculty.

Finally, faculty were surveyed directly in one phase of a study dealing with the relationship between institutional policy on faculty evaluation and the degree of faculty involvement in faculty development activities (O'Connell, 1983). Usable data were collected from 95 faculty in four private liberal arts colleges. The faculty were asked to self-report their involvement in a variety of faculty development activities and their subsequent changed teacher behavior. However, the list of faculty activities specified in the survey included only one activity in which feedback was an obvious component, i.e., consultation with a colleague.

Summary

The studies cited above focus on how and to what extent administrators within higher education view and use information about instruction-related activities for formal evaluation pur-

poses. The literature, further, provides a substantial description of the types of faculty development activities operating within colleges and universities and how the directors of faculty development programs view their effectiveness. However, these studies offer little empirical evidence as to whether, how, and to what extent faculty--those most directly responsible for instruction--seek and make use of feedback to improve instruction.

The following sections describe a study which was designed to address the questions raised about instructional feedback and to involve faculty as the primary informants.

III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

When sampling faculty as a population, several factors become problematic. There is substantial variation among faculty ranks, academic disciplines, and settings within which faculty work. These factors, combined with the size of the total population, make it a heterogeneous population from which to select a representative sample and collect data. Obtaining a representative sample of faculty is obviously not impossible, simply costly and technically difficult. In addition, the methodologies available for collecting data from large samples severely limit the ability to probe for descriptive details and explanations of particular responses. Given the dearth of information regarding actual faculty practices related to the research questions, it was decided to sacrifice representativeness of the total faculty population for the possibility of probing in-depth into the practices of a sample of faculty in a single setting.

Design

A case-study approach was used to examine if, how, and to what extent university faculty receive, seek, and use feedback about instruction-related activities that is then directed toward adapting, changing and improving their teaching, courses, and curricula.

Population/Sample

One college within The Ohio State University was selected as

the site for the study. The college was considered to be representative of colleges within doctoral-granting universities. Its faculty represent a range of academic disciplines and ranks and are involved in instruction, research and service activities. The college provides both graduate and undergraduate instruction through a variety of academic programs and instructional settings, e.g., classrooms, seminars, labs and field experiences.

A sample of one-third of the faculty was derived by selecting every third name from an alphabetized list of the college's roster of full-time faculty teaching courses during Spring Quarter, 1984. The distribution of the 41 selected faculty, across the 11 academic units and three faculty ranks, approximated the distribution of the college faculty population. Table 1 shows, according to academic unit and faculty rank, the distribution of the faculty population in the college; Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample according to the same characteristics.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Faculty Population
across Academic Units and Ranks

Academic Unit	Full-Time Faculty		Faculty Rank (N)		
	N	%*	Full	Associate	Assistant
01	24	19	13	6	5
02	5	4	4	0	1
03	12	10	5	2	5
04	16	13	11	2	3
05	13	10	9	2	2
06	10	8	7	1	2
07	10	8	4	5	1
08	12	10	4	5	3
09	5	4	4	1	0
10	4	3	3	1	0
11	15	12	3	6	6
	126	101	67	31	28

TABLE 2

Distribution of Faculty Sample
across Academic Units and Ranks

Academic Unit	Full-Time Faculty		Faculty Rank (N)		
	N	%*	Full	Associate	Assistant
01	8	20	4	2	2
02	2	5	2	0	0
03	3	7	2	0	1
04	4	10	2	2	0
05	5	12	2	1	2
06	3	7	2	1	0
07	4	10	1	3	0
08	3	7	0	2	1
09	2	5	2	0	0
10	2	5	1	1	0
11	5	12	0	2	3
	41	100	18	14	9

*Rounded to nearest whole percent

Data Collection

The 41 faculty were each invited to participate in one-hour interviews. Only one person declined, and he was substituted with another randomly selected faculty member of the same rank. The faculty were contacted by phone to schedule an interview appointment, and they were sent a background information sheet to complete prior to their individually scheduled meeting (see Appendix A).

Two interviewers were present at 38 of the 41 interviews. With the permission of each faculty participant, all interviews were audio-recorded. This approach freed the interviewers to concentrate on the interview process.

The interviews proceeded from the general to the specific. First, the background information sheet was reviewed and discussed to assure that the faculty member's overall teaching responsibilities and assignments were accurately recorded and understood by the interviewers. The faculty were then asked to describe what, if anything, they or others did to obtain information about their instruction-related activities. Each participant was asked probing questions regarding the actual sources, uses, and users of the information. Each was further asked to describe information he or she found useful for making changes and improvements and whether they had ever changed their teaching, courses or curricula as a result of information they or others had acquired. If the faculty member did not mention any evaluation activities with students, colleagues, department chairs or other individuals, the interviewers asked about these parties as possible sources of

information, as well as their actual involvement with the interviewee.

If the faculty member reported using instruments or forms for collecting information, the interviewers requested to see a copy and asked when, how often, and for what purposes the instrument(s) was used. The instruments were collected for further analysis later.

The final part of each interview was arranged to give the faculty member the opportunity to reflect on and discuss problems, issues, and recommendations related to teaching, instructional evaluation practices, and the improvement of instruction in the university.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Transcriptions of the interviews were prepared from the audiotapes. A constant-comparative analysis method (Glaser, 1969) was used while reviewing the transcriptions. The transcriptions were reviewed for possible common and divergent themes, constructs, or content categories. These categories were derived from the content of the interviews and were not pre-defined. One of the interviewers reviewed a single transcript and noted possible content category labels. The interviewer proceeded with this process for several transcripts, each time trying to "bracket" the conceptual framework derived from the previous transcripts. This process was followed until no new categories seemed to emerge (approximately 8 transcripts). The second interviewer reviewed this work, and the two interviewers discussed the categories and confirmed that all of the important content from the transcriptions

was accurately accounted for in one or more of the general construct labels listed and defined in Appendix B.

These derived category labels were not considered to be sacred, final or mutually exclusive. They were rather viewed as an aid for organizing this massive volume of text into a more orderly, accessible, and useful form than 41 intact interview transcriptions. The original transcriptions were also available for reinspection as needed.

The categories were assigned a symbolic code and all 41 transcriptions were reviewed and manually coded using this scheme. Each coded transcript was then entered into a mainframe computer using the WYLBUR text editing program. By using the WYLBUR program in conjunction with the SCRIPT word processing program, the researchers were able to create two large files and to assign a detailed code to each line of text. The code identified each line by the content category, interviewee, department, rank, tenure status, and a teaching load index. A "list" command then allowed the researchers to merge all the comments related to a particular category and print them by category. This coding and organization allowed the researchers to easily review comments across the sample by category, or to review comments across categories. It also allowed them to quickly access comments by faculty member, department or rank. A sample page of the 22,000 line printout used for analysis is shown in Appendix C.

The two interviewers discussed perceived themes, patterns, and relationships and reached agreements regarding a more refined conceptual framework for reporting the findings as well as reason-

able interpretations of the data. Following is a summary of the findings and interpretations derived from this case study.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings regarding feedback about instruction-related activities are organized into two sections: Section A reports on feedback acquired through artificial mechanisms; Section B reports on feedback acquired through more naturally occurring, non-intentional events. Artificial feedback mechanisms are defined as intentional ways in which faculty seek feedback about their instruction-related activities, or ways in which others purposefully seek to acquire information about instruction-related activities and then provide that information to faculty. Natural feedback is defined as information acquired through the normal course of performing or interacting with others.

Direct quotes from the interviews are reported throughout the Findings chapter. The person responsible for each statement is cited using a faculty code number following each quotation.

Section A: Artificial Feedback Mechanisms

Introduction

Faculty most frequently referred to promotion and tenure review as a mechanism through which they have received, or expect to receive, feedback about their performance. The second most frequently mentioned mechanism was written student evaluations of teaching, with 33 out of the 41 faculty (80%) reporting that they currently and systematically conduct some type of written student evaluation of teaching in most of their courses. The remaining 12 types of artificial feedback mechanisms were reported by a much smaller percentage of the total sample and were reportedly used

less routinely. Seven out of the 12 types were mentioned by 10% or less of the sample. Table 3 lists, in rank order, the types and reported use frequency of each artificial feedback mechanism. Appendix D includes a complete listing of artificial feedback mechanisms identified with each faculty member in the sample.

TABLE 3

Artificial Feedback Mechanisms Reported by Faculty
in Obtaining Instruction-Related Feedback

Type of Artificial Feedback Mechanism	Faculty Users		Users' Academic Units	
	n	% of Sample	n	% of Sample
Promotion and tenure reviews	41	100%	11	100%
Written student evaluations of instruction	33	80	10	91
Annual performance reviews	13	32	8	73
Analysis of student performance on tests	10	24	8	73
Departmental interviews/surveys of graduating seniors	10	24	6	55
Discussions with individual faculty for purpose of critique	6	15	2	11
In-class observations by peers	5	12	4	36
Group discussions with teaching faculty for purpose of critique	4	10	3	27
Curriculum review committees	4	10	4	36
Individually requested review of teaching materials	4	5	2	18
Discussions with individual students or groups of students for purpose of course critique	2	5	3	27
Consultation with a teaching improvement consultant	2	5	2	18
Faculty development committee	2	5	2	18
Colleague rating form	1	2	1	9

Each time a mechanism was mentioned the participant was asked to describe the actual process in detail--including when, how often, nature of the information collected or communicated, actual use of the information, and perceived value of the information for making informed adaptations and improvements. The faculty's descriptions of each of these mechanisms are recounted in the summary below.

Promotion and Tenure Reviews

All of the full and associate professors cited promotion and tenure reviews as means through which they had received a limited amount of feedback about their teaching performance. The assistant professors cited future review as a process for which they were collecting information about their teaching and from which they expected to receive performance feedback.

There was a marked difference between the ways full professors who had been on campus 10-30 years and full and associate professors who had been on campus 10 years or less described their personal experiences with promotion and tenure reviews. The oldest professors said they had played no role in documenting their teaching for promotion and tenure, and they had no idea exactly what information was considered. They usually learned they received promotion and tenure when they discovered a salary increase and title change on their new contract. One faculty member said:

> When I went through the tenure process, I don't recall submitting any information about my teaching.... I didn't even know my name was going forward to be considered--I didn't know it until I learned from the chairman that I had been tenured. We were asked each year to bring our CVs up to date, and I did that. And he talked to graduating students about courses. I assume that he obtained

> most of his information that way. I don't know to what extent I was evaluated on my teaching. I expect it was mostly on the research I had done. I don't recall ever getting any written communication about it until I actually got my contract to sign, and it came with Associate Professor on it. (f18)

On the other hand, the full and associate professors who had received promotions and/or tenure in the last 10 years said that they had been required to provide reviewers with some evidence about their teaching. In most cases the evidence provided was restricted to summaries of student evaluation results and a description of their courses according to enrollment, credit hours, etc. They also included any course development activities they might have been involved with. These faculty, however, reported that they had no idea exactly how their instruction-related information was actually reviewed or weighted during the decision making.

Only four faculty described any process through which colleagues observed their in-class teaching performance as part of the promotion and tenure review; in each of these instances the faculty received no specific feedback regarding these persons' observations. Written reports were apparently given to chairs and others involved in the review. Faculty remarked that they assumed they performed satisfactorily because they never heard otherwise.

One department was reported to have Peer Review Committees which are required to be used by untenured assistant professors and whose function was described as "to help young faculty move toward promotion and tenure."

In no instance did faculty report review by colleagues,

chairs, or others of the quality of subject matter, exam practices, student outcome measures, or instructional materials as part of promotion and tenure reviews. They did report that letters by colleagues, chairs, and persons outside of the university were often included in their promotion and tenure dossiers. Since these were reportedly usually added after the professor submitted his materials to the chair, they did not serve as a direct feedback source to the faculty member. Because the supporting letters of these people were reportedly so seldom based on first-hand review of teaching performance or courses, any references to the faculty member's instruction-related performance were assumed by the interviewees to be derived from general impressions or hearsay from students.

The feedback received in the last ten years by faculty as part of promotion and tenure review was reportedly a general letter of acceptance or rejection. They reportedly interpreted their acceptance as meaning they were generally performing satisfactorily, but they were given no specific feedback about separate aspects of their performance.

One way that faculty use promotion and tenure reviews as performance feedback is by noticing who is accepted and who is rejected along the way. They interpret these personnel decisions and use the information for directing and documenting their own performance. It appears to them that excellent researchers are more likely to gain promotion and tenure than excellent teachers, even though "no one will ever openly admit it."

The faculty's general impression is that evidence of excellent teaching performance without satisfactory research accom-

plishments is not sufficient for promotion or tenure. However, excellent research accomplishments without satisfactory teaching performance is sufficient. None of the participants was able to describe specific university or department standards for excellent or satisfactory performance in either area. They typically commented that they thought satisfactory teaching performance was measured by "not too many students complaining to the chair."

Standards of satisfactory research performance were described by some as one article in a refereed journal each year. They were described by others as five such publications a year. Still others described publications in refereed journals and research grants as necessary for promotion to full professor. Most of the faculty reported that the expectations for satisfactory performance are undefined and unclear. The associate and assistant professors almost invariably expressed a desire for more explicit definition of performance standards and expectations so that they could understand more clearly how to direct their actions. The faculty seemed to agree that "more and more documentation" is being required for promotion and tenure and that the individual faculty member is primarily responsible for assembling the dossier. However, once the dossier is submitted the faculty were reportedly unsure of how or if information about teaching was specifically treated, and they reported receiving no feedback other than a final decision.

Written Student Evaluations

Thirty-three of the 41 faculty participants claimed that they currently conduct written student evaluation of their courses.

The claims of these 33 were confirmed with physical samples they provided. Three additional faculty participants claimed to collect written evaluations from students, but their claim could not be substantiated with physical evidence. Based on this lack of evidence, confirmed in their interviews, it was judged that these three faculty did not actually (currently) conduct written student evaluations, and their responses were analyzed assuming they were non-users. The remaining five participants reported that they did not conduct written student evaluations of their courses.

The physical samples provided by the 33 current users were analyzed as to type of format used, and the faculty were grouped accordingly. The comments for each group were reviewed as to reported reasons for administering the evaluation, claimed value of the process, methods of evaluating the findings, reported changes made as a result, and factors which seemed related to specific practices.

Formats in Use

Faculty used essentially three types of formats: 1) formats with primarily rating items (some of which include a limited number of general-comments items); 2) formats with descriptive items only; and 3) formats which include a substantial number of both rating and descriptive items. Table 4 summarizes the types of instruments and formats used by the faculty in the sample to obtain student feedback about their instruction.

TABLE 4

Types of Instruments and Formats
Used for Written Student Evaluations

Instrument/Format	n	% of Users
Primarily rating items		
University SET	9	27
Cornell	7	21
Non-standardized	5	15
Subtotal	21	64
Descriptive items only	7	21
Combination of formats	5	15

Rating items are defined as those which request that a numerical value be assigned to some designated dimension of instructor behavior or the course. Rating items were used as the primary data collection tool by 21 of the 33 faculty. Formats were of two types, standardized and non-standardized. In addition, two kinds of standardized instruments were used: 1) a university form (SET), and 2) the Cornell Diagnostic and Observation Instrument.

The University SET is designed so the faculty member can select up to 20 rating items (a 5-point rating scale) from a menu of 200+ items. The instrument also includes five required "core items" selected by the university administration and intended to provide a set of common questions of high generalizability that are applicable to all, or nearly all, courses. In addition, the

faculty member can ask the students to provide written comments, or responses to open-ended questions, on the back of the response form. The rating items are machine-scored, and a statistical summary of individual, college and university-wide results are returned to the faculty member along with the response sheets. Analysis and interpretation of the students' written comments are left up to the instructor.

The Cornell Diagnostic and Observation instrument is a student evaluation of teaching tool that is offered through the college. It was developed at Cornell University and norm-referenced using "exemplar" college teachers as a norming group. It includes 28 rating items (5-point scale) which focus on specific in-class teacher behaviors. It includes an additional seven items in which the student can rate how effective he or she thinks the instructor was at accomplishing seven general teaching objectives. The teacher can then identify those teaching objectives which he or she was most interested in "targeting." The instrument is machine-scored and a computer printout of individual item-by-item and norm-referenced comparative statistics is provided to the instructor. The form does not allow for open-ended items or for selecting items.

Descriptive items are defined as those which ask the student to describe his or her experience or opinion of certain aspects of the course, or simply general impressions. They require no numerical value to be assigned as a response. Descriptive formats were used by seven participants and ranged from extremely unstructured to extensive lists of course-specific, open-ended

items. The least structured of these included one in which a faculty member asked the students to take out a blank piece of paper and comment on the course:

> [I tell them to] think about the course--the lecture, the labs, the instructor, the TA. I suggest categories for them to comment on, which usually differ from course to course because my courses differ in organization and structure--some have labs, some don't, etc. Or they can make comments outside of these categories. I give them a pretty free rein. (f28)

Another faculty member lists several open-ended questions on the board and asks the students to write their responses on a piece of paper. These questions include asking them to address such things as:

> The depth versus the breadth of the subject matter, the usefulness and relevancy of the text, the examinations, their opinions of me as an instructor--Do I appear prepared for class? Am I interested in the students? Do I know the subject matter? Do I keep them interested? Do I have any annoying habits. Or anything else they'd like to comment on regarding the course. (f11)

Five faculty members from the sample used a combination of written student evaluation formats. Those formats included either more than one type of form for the same class or a single form with a substantial number of both rating and descriptive items. Three faculty used both a standardized rating items form and a self-designed form with descriptive items for the same class. The other two used a self-designed form that included a substantial number of both non-standardized rating items and descriptive items.

Reasons for Use

Users of rating items. The majority of the interviewed faculty (64%) administered rating items as a means of collecting feedback from students; however only two of these represented desire for improvement as their primary reason for administering these items. Four of the 21 (19%) were full professors who were either required by their department to administer a group of 15 department-selected SET items, or who had been instrumental in getting the Cornell to be used in their college and felt an obligation to continue using it. The remaining 15 users (71%) cited documentation for promotion and tenure as their primary reason.

Users of descriptive items. Unlike the users of primarily rating items, no one who used only descriptive items reported promotion and tenure as their primary reason for conducting student evaluations of their courses. Instead, they all defined their guiding rationale in terms that referred to:

1) A desire to acquire information that might help them continue to develop and improve their courses;

2) The perception that written comments and opinions, rather than numerical values assigned to predefined dimensions, are more adequate for collecting information useful for identifying improvement needs.

Users of a combination of formats. These five faculty described the most extensive formal student evaluations of teaching of all the faculty interviewed. They tended to use rating items to provide numbers or comparative data for administrators; they administered descriptive items for the purpose of self- and course improvement. All five had high teaching loads, representing five of the ten highest teaching loads across the sample.

All five stated or implied a particularly strong commitment to continued self-improvement and development.

Claimed Value

Users of primarily rating items. None of the users of the rating item format espoused a particularly high value for the usefulness of rating items as feedback for making instructional adaptations and improvements. The SET users were openly critical of the usefulness of the rating items. Users of the Cornell and the non-standardized rating items expressed their value in relationship to negative experiences they had had with the SET rating form, rather than any inherent value in the feedback provided. The most common negative statement regarding the usefulness of the SET rating items was that the faculty believe rating results can be predicted without administering the instrument. Faculty commented that the ratings provide them with no more information than they can get from simply being aware of natural feedback received in the process of teaching the course.

The following statements are typical of those which faculty made regarding the value they place on information gained from rating forms:

> Nothing has ever shown up that was a surprise. I think I can evaluate how well I've done without that. (f10)
>
> I can tell you what the students are going to say before I hand it out to them. (f20)
>
> After so many years of this, you know what is going to be there. That doesn't vary much. (f29)
>
> I don't think that the SET is worth the paper it's printed on. I don't think the Cornell is worth the paper it's printed on. I think the questions are trite. They call for pat responses

> from the students. I don't think they ask for an in-depth investigation of what really takes place in a classroom situation. I always tell my students: "This is an SET. I have the opportunity to pick from some 200+ questions those which are going to appear on this form. Therefore it should be obvious to you who are intelligent individuals that I have self-selected questions which are going to be of most benefit to me [in promotion and tenure]. (f34)
>
> I've seen enough of these to know about where I'm going to come out. (f39)
>
> I don't have a great amount of faith in either the Cornell or the SET. That's where I start from. I didn't say one of these is really good. I recognized the need to have some kind of evaluation. There is maybe 10% of the questions asked in either of them that provide me useful information. I think the rest of it is really a waste of time. (f40)

The users of the SET and non-standardized rating forms tend to include a general comments section. The faculty claim that the comments in these sections provide them with useful feedback for making instructional adaptations and improvements. They report giving these comments more careful consideration than the rating results and value them more highly in terms of meaning and worth.

> I feel like if they (students) feel strongly enough to comment--positive or negative--everyone fills out the front, but not everyone takes the time to put down written comments. They carry more weight--whether it's formally or informally in my mind. (f04)
>
> I get good ideas from the students. The kind I like the best is the open-ended. Those are the ones that I get the best feedback from. (f20)
>
> I feel I get the most from written comments. It's perhaps one out of five or six students that will address a point and say it in a way that they may have heard it before but said in a way that gets to you. Convinces you that you've got to work on that and do something about it. (f29)
>
> I usually turn first to the comments on the back. My lab technician and I go through them and

consider their comments. (f37)

> What I think is more valuable is written comments. I stress with the students that I get more input and better feedback from the written comments than I do from coloring in the circles. (f38)

> I have found the students' answers to my open-ended questions very useful and I've found that the students are very open on that kind of a thing. (f39)

Users of descriptive format. The faculty in this group did not express any particular criticism of descriptive items as a means of collecting written student evaluations. Their criticisms were all directed toward their negative impressions of the SET system. In fact, they tended to be generally positive in their expressed value of student evaluations. One professor's comments are representative of these expressed sentiments:

> I don't think I've ever taught a course in which student evaluations weren't a part. Now, I didn't spend a lot of effort at it. However, I've always had an evaluation at the end of the quarter, and I also place a great deal of confidence in that evaluation. (f28)

Users of a combination of formats. These users placed a high value on the information they acquire from written student evaluations. They, however, like the other two users groups, reported that descriptive items, rather than rating items, provide them with the information useful for identifying and making instructional changes for improvement. One faculty member stated it this way:

> I use the SET and a self-designed form with open-ended items for each course I teach. I want information about teaching from any class I teach. The SET gives me an overview and a set of numbers I can give to my chair. But it doesn't give me the depth

> that I want to know about what I'm doing--not only what I'm doing wrong, but what I'm doing right too. I'm getting a ceiling effect from the SET--I'm high on everything--it was not really contributing to my knowledge of what could be improved in that class. (f26)

Process of Use

Regardless of format used, the faculty generally reported conducting written student evaluation at the end of their courses. Only two faculty members said that they had ever administered a mid-course student evaluation, and both of these used a descriptive format.

The users of rating items tended to administer the same items for every course, every quarter, and every year. The users of only descriptive items, or a combination of formats which emphasize descriptive items, generally: 1) indicated giving more thought and attention to individualizing the item content to the course being evaluated; 2) described more personal involvement in designing the items; and 3) expressed a much stronger personal commitment to using student evaluations of their teaching and courses as an important tool for self and course development and improvement.

The users reported similar practices once the evaluations are completed. The users of primarily rating items reported that they: 1) review the results for significant trends; 2) review any written comments and consider possible changes to make; 3) seldom discuss the results with anyone; 4) often provide a summary of the results to the chair, although the chair does not usually discuss it with them; and 5) file the ratings data for annual reviews and/or future promotion and tenure proceedings.

The users of only descriptive items review the students' comments and consider possible changes to enact. They, however, often include a colleague, such as a lab demonstrator, TA, or team member, in this review process and discuss possible adaptations and improvements. The assistant and associate professors then file the forms for possible use in future annual reviews or promotion and tenure proceedings, or have the comments typed before filing them.

The users of a combination of formats indicated they are likely to file the ratings results for future use, and discuss the responses from descriptive items with a colleague or TA.

The internal judgment process that faculty described using for considering the need for adaptations or changes is similar regardless of format used. The faculty reported individually reviewing the results and, for the most part, individually deciding whether or not to make adaptations/improvements.

Users of rating items said that they simply look for items which a "large number" of students may have rated it below average. The faculty then weigh the students' response against their own internal values and decide whether to make related changes.

> I guess I probably look at the mean rating. I'm merely trying to pick up those things they rate less well. I have to then ask if it was one of my objectives to do that. (f02)

> They have pointed out, confirmed problems with the course that I know exist, but they are not things that I am willing to change about the course. (f04)

> It's easiest to make ... changes when you feel that way yourself. (f06)

Frequency of a particular response and held values also influence the judgment process related to descriptive items or written comments. However, the nature of this information allows at least three additional factors to influence the faculty members' judgment process. Faculty report that they can often tell which students were responsible for particular comments. Therefore, their perception of the student influences the value they place on the comment. Second, only one student may make a particular comment, but if it is considered to be particularly interesting or significant, the faculty may decide to make a change. Third, written comments tend to be very specific and/or explanatory so faculty believe the information provides them more than rating items do with direction for making changes.

Reported changes. Faculty reported at one time or another having made changes in their instruction in one or more of the following areas as a response to student feedback: in-class teacher behavior, examination practices, organization of course content/lectures, subject matter covered, teaching materials (textbook, overheads, handouts) or course structure.

The majority of users, even when they criticized the value or usefulness of written student evaluations, claimed to have at one time or another made changes in their courses related to student evaluation of teaching results.

The changes were often described by the faculty as relatively "minor." Nonetheless they often described a process whereby, based at least in part on written student evaluations, they had changed some aspects of their instruction--tests, delivery, content covered, organization of presentations, etc.

Seven of the 33 users did not claim to have made changes based on written student evalautions. These faculty were three Cornell users and four SET users.

The following are samples of faculty comments about changes made as a result of written student evaluations:

> I was consistently getting feedback about a certain amount of unfairness in examinations. Since then I've overcome student objections to exams. I used the college teaching consultant to help me. (f02)

> The area from which I got the lowest score was arousing student interest. Number 15 says: "Does he put his material across in an interesting way?" So I tried to address that. (f08)

> Everyone jumped on me and said it was too much work for a four-hour course. They said the one thing that would really help was a one-hour recitation preceding the lab. So now we do that. (f25)

> As a result of student feedback, I've made mostly curricular changes. Based on student comments I have revised the syllabi in terms of giving extra time to a subject, or I have supplemented that with programmed units or other ways to interact with the curriculum within microcomputers or with learning activity packages or we have a whole series of mastery tests that are nongraded activities and so we have given people practice exercises with which to practice their skills. (f26)

> I get some good comments. Constructive criticism. Not that you are wonderful, fantastic. But slow down, do more overheads. Give us a handout. You need to structure this into two lectures instead of one. We would like to see a representative from this area make a presentation. Those are the things I look at (f34)

> Yes, I've definitely changed things as a result of both formal and informal student evaluation processes. One of the things that was marked a little lower was transition from one subject to another and flow of the courses. So I've made some changes this year that revamped those lectures. (f35)

> You don't change things from student evaluations as much as you'd like to think you use them. I have

changed some things as a result of student input, though. In one class we're not going to have a midterm, because it's a three-hour course and it meets three times per week and they said they're always behind. We decided to have weekly or bi-weekly quizzes. (f41)

Factors Related to the Use of Written Student Evaluations

Faculty rank. As shown in Figure 1, an instructor's rank appears to be related to both the use of written student evaluations and the type of items used. A full professor was almost as likely not to use written student evaluations as he was to use them. Eight of the 18 full professors currently use no written student evaluations, whereas all the assistant and associate profssors in the sample used some means of conducting written student evaluations. However, the assistant and associate professors were more likely to use rating items than they were to use either only descriptive items or a combination of formats. The full professors, if they used written student evaluations, were more likely to use descriptive items only or a combination of formats.

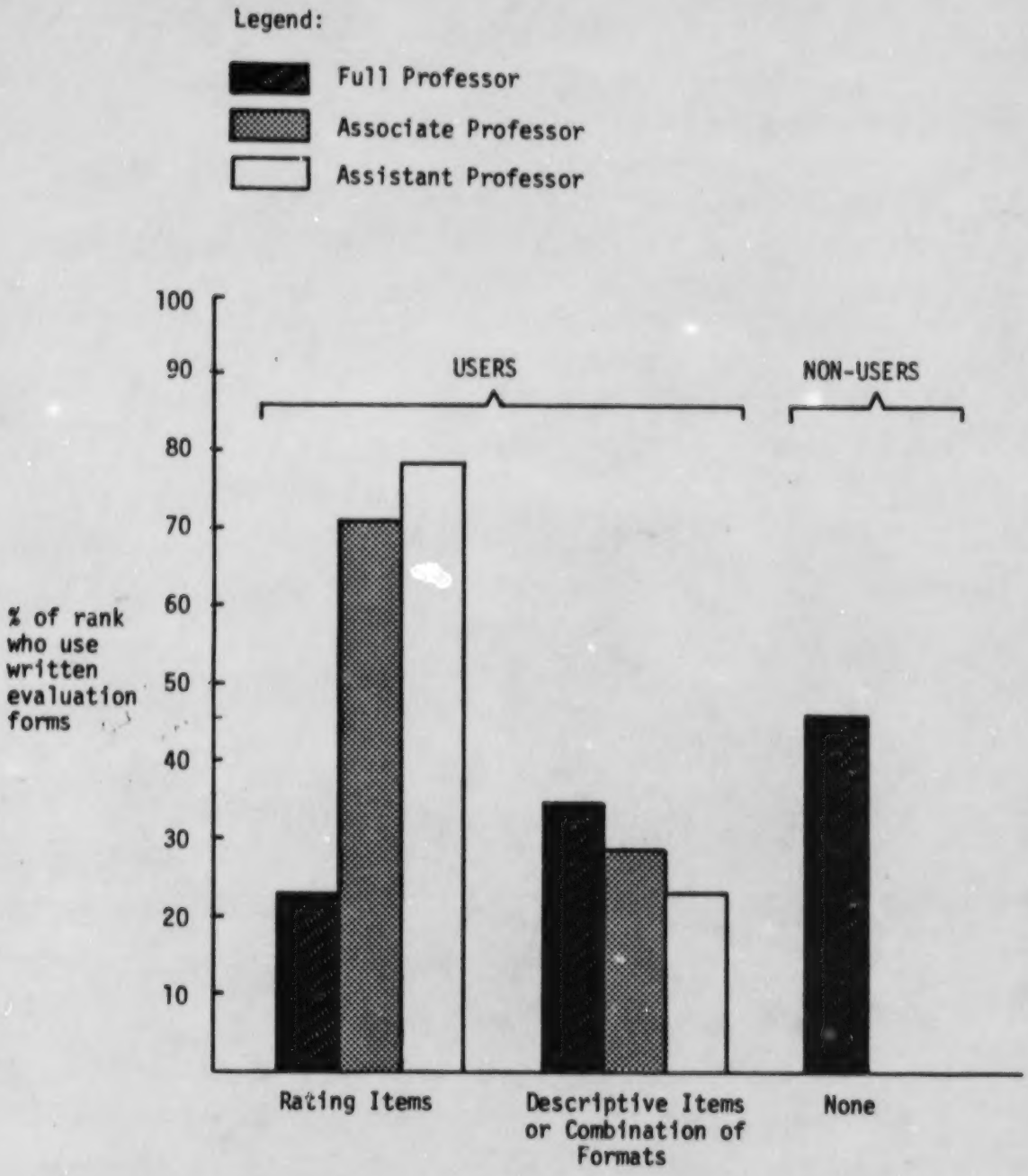

Figure 1. Use of written student evaluations among three faculty ranks.

Policy. The university does not mandate the use of any one form for written student evaluations of teaching, but one of the duties of the chairman of a department or director of a school is specified in Rules of the University Faculty (1983) as:

> To promote improvement of instruction by providing for the evaluation of each course when offered, including a written evaluation by students of the course and instructors, and periodic course review by the faculty. (pp. 12-25)

The Faculty Handbook (1984) further specifies "opinions of students, appropriately documented and accompanied by interpretive information" (p. 2.a.15) as one type of teaching performance evidence to be considered in promotion and tenure decisions.

The faculty reported great similarities in the ways these policies are being interpreted and enacted across academic units. They described their department policies as "encouraging but not requiring" the faculty to conduct written student evaluations. Only one department actually mandated that a particular set of student evaluation items be administered in all courses.

The faculty generally reported that they believe that quantitative measures of student opinion are preferred over qualitative evidence in promotion and tenure proceedings. One result of this belief is that assistant and associate professors are inclined to restrict their collection of student feedback information to primarily ratings data, even though they described the data as inadequate for their needs related to instructional improvement and development.

Annual Performance Reviews

Annual performance reviews were described as a process

through which the faculty member meets annually with the department chair to discuss past accomplishments and future goals. A written report is usually prepared by the faculty member, given to the chair, and used as a reference for discussion. A section for listing and describing instruction-related activities is usually a part of each of these reports, and written student evaluations of teaching, or summaries of the results, are most often included. The faculty were probed as to: What portion of the discussion focused on instruction? What about instruction was actually discussed during annual reviews? Did they receive feedback useful for making changes? Although annual reviews were the third most frequently named source of formal feedback (n=13), when probed, faculty claimed that very little time was spent discussing instruction in annual review meetings.

When instruction is discussed it's reportedly done in very general terms. The chair might say: "It looks like you're doing O.K." or "Your student ratings look fine--now what about your research activities?"

In addition, although faculty reported usually including their student evaluations of teaching as part of their annual reports, chairs reportedly seldom discuss them.

Following are faculty comments which typify the faculty's view of annual reviews as a tool for making instructional improvements:

> I guess I basically see the annual review form as bookkeeping. I don't like all the paper work and the time it takes to accumulate all that information, but that's the way things are done. I keep a file and I fill that out--so it's bookkeeping to me. (f04)

> I guess I would characterize it as going in to talk about the weather. It is just a matter that there are certain things to go by the book. You have to do certain things. (f22)
>
> Most of it focuses on what you are doing in research. (f20)

Analysis of Student Performance on Tests

Ten of the 41 faculty mentioned that they sometimes reviewed the test performance of their students in order to assess the quality and appropriateness of their exams. The most common form of analysis was described as checking to see whether a large percentage of their students were missing a particular item and if so they would then consider changing the item. This analysis process was usually done by simply perusing exam results rather than through any method of statistical item analysis. A few faculty reported having used the university's computerized item analysis service for multiple choice items; however they weren't always certain they were interpeting the statistical printout correctly. The majority of faculty (76%) did not mention using student exam performance as feedback for possibly changing or improving their courses or exams.

Departmental Interviews/Surveys of Graduating Seniors.

Ten faculty, representing six out of the 11 departments, referred to interviews and/or surveys of graduating seniors conducted by their chairs either currently or in the past. The faculty reported that the chair conducted these surveys for the purpose of assessing the students' opinions about individual courses, faculty, and their program of study. In most instances, however, the information was collected but not shared with the

faculty. When it was reported to faculty, the information dealt with instruction in such general terms that the faculty were unable to use it to make changes. They did report that it gave them general impressions as to the students' level of satisfaction with a particular course or program and, when that feedback was positive, it served to reinforce or maintain some of their practices. Although none of the participants reported receiving negative feedback through this process, they were under the impression that if the information reported to the chairs was particularly negative the chair would inform the instructor. Hence, they viewed it as a process that potentially could lead to instructional improvement. They could not, however, cite a specific case where this had occurred.

Discussions with Individual Faculty and Teaching Assistants for the Purpose of Critique

Six faculty mentioned conditions under which they had held one or more general discussions with another faculty member for the explicit purpose of reviewing a course. Two of the interviewed faculty once team-taught a course together and now rotate teaching the same course. They each independently acclaimed the value of the feedback gained from one another and felt that their discussions had shaped and reshaped the course several times. They both said they wished they had the opportunity to have the same kind of interchanges about the other courses they teach. One of these team teachers also described a situation in which a faculty member from another department who was interested in what content was being covered had sat in on

one of his courses for the whole quarter. He said that they had "a very useful discussion" at the end of the course.

Four faculty members said they discussed aspects of their course with their teaching assistants. They described a process through which, at the end of the quarter, they sat down together and talked about how things went and what they might want to change next time.

Inclass Observations by Peers (Planned Observations Resulting in a Written Report)

Five faculty reported instances in which a colleague had observed their teaching performance and had made evaluative notes. Two of these five claimed that they had not been given these evaluative reports. In both cases, the observations were conducted as part of a promotion and tenure review, and they assumed they did "O.K." because they both received tenure.

In another instance, a resource person was in to lecture for part of a class. He stayed for the remainder of the class, and the instructor asked him to write a report of his observations. The resource person was reportedly not particularly specific in his written report, but the instructor said the feedback was generally positive. While the faculty member did not report making any changes based on the observation, he did report that a a copy of the report be sent to the chair.

A fourth faculty member reported that he had a joint appointment in a department associated with the education discipline. He said that once or twice a year he requests a member from that department to observe one of his classes and write an evaluation. He described the process as one in which they use no

particular instrument, but rather report generally about dimensions of teaching "such as clarity, enthusiasm, businesslike manner, etc." He reported that the feedback is usually positive so he doesn't need to change anything.

A fifth person, an assistant professor, reported that a senior faculty member sat in on his entire graduate course the third time he taught it, because the senior member was interested in learning the content. Toward the end of the quarter, they discussed the possibility of the observer writing an evaluation report. While the assistant professor was interested in the feedback for improvement purposes, he reported being primarily interested in receiving a written report by a senior faculty member that he could put in his file for promotion and tenure. He didn't describe having made any particular changes as a result of this observation process.

In-class observation by peers, whether strictly for promotion and tenure or for the individual development of the faculty member, was infrequently cited as a feedback source. When it was cited, feedback was described as strictly episodic and never including standardized or nonstandardized observation instruments.

Group Discussions with Teaching Faculty for Purpose of Critique

Four faculty mentioned that they have sometimes discussed courses with other faculty in their departments, or with faculty involved in teaching interdepartmental courses. Faculty reported that these discussions sometimes included sharing informal student comments about related courses both within and outside of

their departments, as well as sometimes sharing course materials. Again, these discussions were characterized as infrequent and general in their focus. In none of these examples did colleagues review or evaluate specific courses, or through these discussions, provide or receive feedback that resulted in particular adaptations or changes in the teaching of individual faculty. The discussions were reported as sometimes occuring when faculty were trying to coordinate a series of courses across departments, when a new course series was being instituted, or when there were several faculty teaching different sections of the same course. The large majority of faculty (90%) did not report current or part involvement with colleagues in such discussions.

Curriculum Review Committees

All eleven departments have standing curriculum committees. Four faculty mentioned these committees as a feedback source. The activities of these committees were described as reviewing course outlines and syllabi for all new courses proposed within the department. A member of one of these departmental committees gave the following description of the process:

> If there is a faculty member who wants to start a new course, he or she will prepare the documentation for it and present it to our committee. We will discuss it, look at it, see if it is something that is needed in the department that we have the resources for. We are particularly concerned with duplication--being sure the proposed content isn't already covered somewhere else. We look at prerequisites to be sure they're reasonable for the course level, credit hours versus propsed meeting hours, that type of thing. If we agree it's needed, we'll forward the paperwork to the college's academic affairs committee and they'll do a similar review. (f11)

If the proposed course is turned down, the proposal is reportedly returned to the faculty member for a revision of the documentation. These committees purportedly function for the primary purpose of screening new course proposals before they are sent to the college's academic affairs committee. There was no evidence from the interviews that indicated that once a course was accepted it was ever again reviewed by the curriculum committee.

Additional departmental committees were described as sometimes conducting curriculum reviews of established sequences of courses or programs of study. These reviews were described as irregular (episodic) in occurrence. In other words, these department-initiated reviews were not described as occurring on any scheduled basis, but rather as a response to some perceived situation or crisis. Faculty in three departments described such reviews as being conducted during the academic quarter of the interviews. None of the faculty in any of the other eight departments referred to any such process occurring either currently or in the past. In two of the cases where the reviews were being conducted, they were described as stimulated by a college review of graduation requirements, conducted by the college academic affairs committee and initiated 12-18 months prior to the interviews. One interviewee serving as a member of the college's academic affairs committee said it was the first such curriculum review in the 11 years he had been with the university. Faculty described these departmental curriculum reviews in the following terms:

> I think there were some rumblings among faculty that we weren't looking at the programs regularly,

> that technology was changing and we had not kept up with it and our students were not as well prepared as other students. Something that added impetus to this was that we got a new chairman in charge of academic affairs. It was a way for him to get a good review and to establish his ground rules. What we're trying to do is put more rigor into the area by coordinating things better so we don't have duplication, etc. Most of it was based on: Are we giving this too much repetition in course after course? Do our students really need a basic understanding of this principle or do they need to know how to apply it? (f37)

A faculty member from another department said:

> We're saying let's pretend we don't have any courses on the books and where would you start? We're looking at sections, sizes of classes, etc. I suppose from the beginning of time it's never been reviewed. It's mostly been add courses and nothing's ever been dropped. It's kind of piecemeal. I would say the program won't change dramatically, but in some cases the people teaching the advanced courses don't even know what's going on in the intermediate courses, etc. We only have faculty meetings about once a quarter and when we do we don't really discuss the curriculum. We don't ever have a seminar or retreat on teaching. The review process will give us some reason to discuss what's going on (f41)

The third department in which committees were reviewing curriculum were reportedly doing so because the current chair of a departmental standing committee took the initiative to review the requirements in his particular course sequence. As a result, the department chair appointed another committee to look at another group of courses. The chair of the standing committee described the process as follows:

> The restructuring was stimulated by some of the professors and I talking about the unpreparedness of certain students for certain courses. Just an awareness that in many of the courses in our area we introduced many times the same things. Redundancy was the single biggest feature. We just knew that we weren't taking students far enough because we were doing too much repetitive introduction work. It's a standing committee in its orientation

> is determined by whomever is the chair. When I first came, it was chaired by a person interested in service and the committee's orientation was [service.] When I took it over, my orinetation was more toward teaching and research. We met once a month. As a result of our effort, the department chair created another committee to look at another group of courses. We've had to ask questions about what areas should we cover, what areas should we delete? (f03)

Each of these review processes reportedly dealt only with course outlines and course syllabi. The reviews apparently assumed that what appeared in course outlines and syllabi was an accurate portrayal of the structure of the courses. There is no evidence that committee members reviewed any measure of course outcomes, teaching performance, tests, or the relationship of exams to learning objectives. Consequently, faculty reported the degree and type of feedback gained through this process was limited to acceptance or rejection of the syllabus and the course as a whole. Because none of these reviews had been completed by the time of the inteviews, and because no such reviews were cited by anyone else, evidence was not available as to actual course changes that might have resulted. Faculty hypothesized that the elimination of some courses or subject matter, the proposal of new courses, increased or decreased course prerequisites, and/or different graduation requirements might result from the reviews.

Discussions with Individual Students or Groups of Students for the Purpose of Course Critique

One faculty member said that he had, so far, taught only one offering of a formal course. At the end of the course, he had asked a small number of graduate students to meet with him and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the course. He charac-

terized the process as personally useful, but did not cite any actual changes made as a result. Another participant said he used to have a group discussion with his students at the end of the quarter, but he stopped doing that because he felt the course was well enough structured now that he didn't need to.

Individually Requested Review of Materials

Only four faculty specifically mentioned that they had ever requested their course materials be reviewed by anyone else. Two of the participants produced a lab notebook and asked either their chair or a colleague to review it. Another participant said he had recently turned all of his course notes over to a professor who teaches the first course in the same series of courses. He remarked that: "He's already done some things to improve the organization of the material." (f10) The fourth participant reported that he and other faculty teach sections of the same courses and they share and review each other's material.

Consultation with a Teaching Improvement Consultant

The college chosen for the case study had a faculty member who was available part-time to function as a teaching improvement consultant. Two faculty members in the sample had voluntarily used the service. One was an older faculty member who several years earlier had requested help with his exam practices. He reported that he was very satisfied with the assistance he received from the consultant and that he had changed his learning activities and exams to more closely match his learning objectives.

The other person who used the consultant service was an

untenured assistant professor who described himself as wanting to be a "master teacher." During the 1983-84 academic year he had requested from the teaching consultant an in-depth review of his in-class teaching performance. He reported that the consultant videotaped one of his classes and told the faculty member that he was "doing fine." The faculty member said that he was still not totally satisfied with his class delivery and will probably always keep working to improve it.

Faculty Development Committee

One department represented in the sample was reported to have voluntary "Faculty Development Committees." These were described by two participants from the department as committees which, upon request of a faculty member, are appointed by the chair "to help people improve their teaching." (f27) When functioning, they arrange "to look at our syllabi, come in and critique our teaching, talk to our students, and give us feedback." (f27) No one is required to use such a committee, but they are suggested as a good idea for junior faculty.

Colleague Rating Form

One associate professor said that his department has a colleague rating form that is used once a year to rate the assistant and associate professors who might be considered for promotion and/or tenure. The form was described as not exclusively or very directly related to specific instruction-related activities. However, the faculty member reported that as a member of the committee he had seen his own form and found the feedback to be "very

valuable." He described the items as being "a bit heavy on the personal, but overall you can see where your strengths and weaknesses are. It has things like professional conduct, ability to get along with colleagues, research abilities, teaching abilities, and things like that." (f30)

Section B: Natural Feedback

Introduction

The process through which faculty acquire feedback about instruction-related activities and make subsequent adjustments and improvements was not always described as a formal sort of phenomenon. Virtually all of the faculty referred to the feedback acquired through the normal course of teaching and/or interacting with students and colleagues as a source of information about their instruction-related activities.

Faculty described several situations in which they have acquired natural feedback related to instruction:

1) In class during the act of teaching;

2) Through conversations with students in the faculty member's office, at social events, or at conventions; and

3) Through conversations with colleagues.

In-Class

Several faculty mentioned the facial expressions of students in class as a source of feedback that they sometimes use to immediately adapt what they're doing. They further explained that they purposefully try to "read" the faces of their students and adapt their presentation if they suspect they are not being understood.

I'd say I evaluate my course day to day. Because I think the best evaluation is sitting eyeball-to-eyeball and saying: "Are you getting this?" I can pretty well look at a class and see whether this is mystery hour or they're understanding what I'm talking about. (f01)

Q: What do you really rely on to gauge what you are doing and how you are doing it? How to change things?
A: You've got to watch their faces. I can see if the eyes glaze over--then I know I've gone past them. (f16)

I guess I found if you keep your eyes and ears open sutdents soon tell you whether something you are doing is coming across to them and whether there are other ways to do it. (f19)

Faculty also referred to in-class discussions of exam results and comments made by students during or at the end of a class meeting as sources of natural instructional feedback.

You listen to what the people in the class say. You give them the atmosphere to be able to say things and then you listen to them. (f05)

If the students have concerns or problems with the readings, or when they are confused and come up after class to be helped, then I will know there are problems with certain students on certain readings. I don't have to wait until the end of the quarter to know. (f12)

I might say: "You did really poorly on the quiz. Why?" I want to know why. What is the problem? What is the remedy? We will have a general bull session. (f27)

Out-of-Class Interactions with Students

Conversations with students outside of the classroom were often mentioned as a feedback source. In fact, some faculty reported these informal interactions as particularly valuable feedback.

I rely much more on informal discussions with students which I have frequently throughout the quarter. If they are going to prepare a term paper or

lead a discussion, I encourage them to have a conference in their process of preparing it. Most of them do. (f15)

The real evaluation comes, not in what they write, but in what they say when we have a couple of beers and let our hair down and talk to them after they've had the course and find out what they really think. (f24)

The graduate student-professor relationship is very close at times--they talk to you about the course. (f24)

Conversations with Colleagues

Informal interactions with colleagues were also described as a means through which faculty sometimes receive information about their instruction. While this information is transmitted through colleagues, it reportedly usually consists of comments which have originally been made by students.

Occasionally a faculty member may mention some comment he's heard from one of my students--whether they thought things were or were not going well--you get a little bit of that. (f08)

[Feedback comes] most directly from students. But eventually it is fed through colleagues. I mean eventually colleagues would feed back the same thing that I had already gotten from students. (f19)

I know my students talk about what I do in class. They will discuss that with their advisors, and sometimes the advisor will come to me and say: "I guess you're doing a good job in this class, because you've got somebody on their toes." (f34)

In a limited number of cases faculty described interactions with colleagues in which the conversation was apparently more general than sharing student comments.

I used to have informal discussions with an assistant professor who was across the hall. The other two assistant professors were on the second

> floor. We used to exchange notes at social gatherings. (f03)
>
> The most useful [feedback] source was probably my interactions with the faculty member who also teaches the course. We also talk about his courses that are complementary to mine. (f06)

It was not possible to determine from the transcriptions the time interval between these interactions in which instruction was a topic. However, the comments of several faculty provided the impression that they were quite limited in occurrence.

> I'd like to believe that our faculties need to get together on an informal basis more often because we suffer from the problem of size. I think I hark back to the time when the university had 10,000 students and faculties knew each other on a personal basis whether it was over lunch or socially. It doesn't occur on this campus. There are so many things that are done informally over a cup of coffee that don't happen here. I don't even belong to the Faculty Club. There was a time this would have been ridiculous because it was the social center of the university but it is so big now that I can go over there and see four people I know. I think we suffer from size and the increase in size of the administration. We are so big, so diverse, that we don't hear each other very well. (f16)
>
> We only have faculty meetings about once a quarter and when we do we don't really discuss the curriculum. We don't ever have a seminar or retreat on teaching. There's very little interaction among faculty. My interactions during the day are with students and with people on the telephone. Literally people can be in this building and in this hallway for three or four days and I'll never have an occasion to interact with them. I interact with my graduate students, people out in the state, other students, etc. If faculty do talk, it's pretty much about the basketball game. You just don't interact that much. (f41)

Faculty were not specific about what changes they had actually made as a result of natural feedback. However, they invariably volunteered it as a source of information which they considered important in their daily practice. Further, 17% (n=7)

of the sample described natural feedback as their only current source of feedback about instruction-related activities.

V. INTERPRETATIONS

Preface

We would like to preface this section by stating that in the course of conducting the interviews, the researchers developed the utmost respect for these 41 individuals and for their complex roles within the university. It was our impression that these faculty are sincerely interested in providing quality instruction and that they view instruction as central to the university's mission.

There certainly were some who appeared more invested in their role as teachers than others, but there were no faculty who impressed us as unconcerned about the goal of providing quality instruction. Faculty expressed their attitude toward the teaching role in the following terms:

> In my life teaching has been important. Although I enjoy research, I never could spend my entire time in research. The classroom, the students--that's what is fun. (f02)

> Personally, I think that teaching is what makes me feel good as a person. It is what gives me a sense of social accomplishment or something that is socially constructive. I'm sure you know you get feedback from students that you can't put into a form or responses to a SET form. I guess to some degree the research is a means to an end--to be able to teach. (f04)

> I guess if I would have to say what my real driving force is it would probably be research, because I like thinking up new ideas and working with them. But in the same sense I do like to give a decent class, and I think one of our most important jobs is turning out graduate students. So I work in that area. (f22)

Methodological Issues Related to Findings

Technically speaking, the findings and interpretations from this case study can obviously be generalized only to the college from which the sample was drawn. We do not wish to imply that we are concluding that the practices reported in this study necessarily reflect the practices of all faculty or all universities. The reader will have to judge the applicability of these findings and interpretations to his or her particular setting. However, our experiences at multiversities suggest that these faculty are reporting practices which occur fairly commonly within and across large, complex universities.

We may not have gotten a complete listing of all sources and means of instructional feedback used by individual faculty; however, we did obtain a listing and use frequency of feedback mechanisms which individual faculty thought were important enough to mention. Moreover, because we consistently probed for details regarding feedback types and uses, we are reasonably confident that, across all faculty participants, we identified the major sources and means of instructional feedback which these faculty use, and a reasonable approximation as to their frequency and conditions of use. While we could not have constructed a complete checklist before the study, we now have categories and characteristics of feedback mechanisms that could be used for constructing checklists and surveys in the future.

It was not always possible to judge from the transcriptions whether a faculty member was describing something that was occur-

ring in the present or something that had occurred in the past. In retrospect, it would have been useful if the interviewers had asked systematically for faculty to describe when and in what sequence different tools and methods were used as feedback mechanisms. As it stands, we have cross-sectional information about faculty as a group (including individuals at different points in their careers), but we do not have systematic information about the exact period of time in which each reported practice occurred.

Introduction

In the Findings section of this paper our goal was to report the faculty comments which most directly related to the questions raised in Section I of this paper. The findings, therefore, intend to describe, without making evaluative comments:

- The kinds of feedback which faculty reported having received or purposefully sought about their instruction-related activities;
- The ways faculty claim to acquire and use such information;
- The extent to which faculty claim to purposefully engage in seeking and collecting instruction-related information; and
- The feedback which faculty report as most valuable and useful for adapting, changing and improving their instructional practices.

In this section it is our intention to go beyond description and to offer a more critical/interpretive perspective of these findings. Critique and interpretations naturally reflect the value base of the critiquer/interpreter. We have, therefore,

at times included statements regarding our value perspective so the reader can better judge the basis on which these interpretations are offered. It is not our intention to offer an all-inclusive set of interpretations. The reader may, clearly, form different and/or additional interpretations of his or her own. However, it is our intent to offer a critique that, given the findings and a particular value base, can at least be viewed as credible by the reader.

With this in mind, we have chosen to focus on six issues that we believe are particularly pertinent to the faculty's current use of feedback about instruction-related activities for the purpose of adapting, changing and improving practice:

1. Natural versus artificial feedback;
2. Perceived organizational reward system;
3. Administrative preference for quantified measures;
4. Departmental performance evaluation practices;
5. University's instructional arrangements; and
6. Informal norms.

Natural Feedback vs. Artificial Feedback

It is the opinion of these researchers that the feedback acquired through the natural course of acting and interacting plays an important role in the improvement and development of any individual or organization. It is through this feedback process that we form initial impressions about the need for change. Further, we believe that individuals are continuously adapting their behavior based on the reactions of others and interpretations of these reactions.

However, we do not view the natural feedback process as sufficient to adequately identify the need for change and the nature of needed changes and improvements within formal organizations like universities. Adequate and honest critique of human actions requires the input or perspective of more than the actor. Lofland and Lofland (1984) point out that:

> Ordinary people playing out their ordinary lives are enmeshed in devising and enacting ideas and activities that are responsive to their immediate needs. They are not in a good position to assemble information, to reflect on its meaning, to envision larger contexts in which it might invariably be interpreted, or to contemplate feasible and conceivable alternatives to their situation. Additionally, the other necessary avoidances of ordinary life lead people to miss seeing many aspects of their situations, and to develop legitimizing and accomodating meanings for what they see...In other words, the requirements of acting weaken or nullify the capacity and honesty to reflect on the actions. (p. 120)

We would add that human and organizational improvement and development is facilitated through processes of reflection, discussion, and critique. Given this perspective, one interpretation of the findings in this study is that the feedback about instruction-related activities currently acquired by and available to faculty--and the processes whereby that information is reviewed and critiqued--are inadequately serving the purpose of instructional development and improvement. Faculty in this case study claimed that in most instances they develop, deliver, and assess instruction-related activities without participation in a critique process with anyone outside of themselves.

When review, discussion, and critique of instructional activities is occurring, it is happening so episodically and unpre-

dictably that a faculty member may teach a course for years without any input other than from students. This is not to suggest that students are an unimportant or unreliable source of feedback. However, the experience level of students, and the power and authority issues surrounding the faculty-student relationship, make student opinions an insufficient singular source of information for making instructional changes.

Further, in order to control for perceptual selectivity and bias, the opinions offered by students might more adequately serve the goal of instructional improvement if they were to be reviewed and discussed with others. In fact, those faculty who reported that they did discuss and critique their course with a colleague invariably reported it as being a valuable and beneficial change process.

Aside from the natural problems associated with getting people to objectively assess or to take the time to reflect upon their own actions, there are several organizational factors that significantly influence the faculty's instructional development and improvement practices. Three of these factors center around the perceived reward system within the university and the associated promotion and tenure process.

Perceived Organizational Rewards

The most significant and predominant of these factors is the faculty's perception of what activities are rewarded within the organization. Although administrators in higher education commonly claim that instruction is a highly valued activity and given a fair, if not equal, weighting in performance evaluations,

this was not the perception of the faculty in this study. The participants repeatedly espoused the viewpoint that it is research and not teaching that is rewarded. The "rewards" they were referring to were promotion and tenure. In general, faculty, therefore, do not perceive it as being in their best interest to invest much effort in assessing and improving their instruction. While they acknowledge the importance of providing quality instruction, faculty feel that they can't "afford" to expend too much effort on their instructional activities--the "payoffs" are too small.

> I had a computer-based instruction course I wanted to develop when I came here--but that has to go on the back burner because it takes a fair amount of development time, and unless the research associated with it is directly related to my discipline it won't get me very much in terms of recognition and rewards. It's a relatively low payoff. That may change when I get tenure. Those kinds of things may move more to the front a little bit more. (f03)

> I'm not negative toward teaching in terms of importance. I have to be negative about it in terms of goal satisfaction or anything else. You are not going to get anything by teaching except perhaps to teach more which is going to put you that much further in the hole. Anything I've gotten here in the way of extra help I've bought and that comes from outside funding. That is research. There is no financial reward for teaching that I can see. (f32)

Administrative Preference for Quantified Measures

The institution's apparent preference for quantitative teaching performance measures is limiting, if not determining, the instructional evaluation practices of most assistant and associate professors. Several of these faculty reported having in the past conducted course evaluations in which they used descriptive items

designed for the explicit purpose of collecting information to help them improve and develop their instruction and courses. They further reported that they found this process useful and adapted their courses based on student feedback. However, they stopped this practice and turned to rating items, which they discredit as an improvement tool, when they concluded that administrators preferred some sort of quantified teaching performance measure. These faculty considered it "easier" to administer one evaluation format, and since numbers are preferred for promotion and tenure, they viewed it as more expedient to simply use rating items and a general comments item. One young professor expressed it this way:

> If I didn't need to use a standardized form for promotion and tenure, I would do my own forms. I did that once at the same time I did the Cornell. It was much more useful information for me. The reason I quit using it was that it was too time-consuming. [You have] to go back and calculate all of the composite scores and then get it into a form that would be acceptable [for an annual report]. Then you have to explain its meaning to whoever is reading it. I think probably as pertinent as anything was the indication of the current chair at the time that the self-developed evaluation form simply didn't cut as much weight as standardized forms, because they weren't able to compare your results with the university-wide aspect of things. One of my major responsibilities is to publish to get promoted, so I don't have enough time to do [more] evaluation. (f 24)

For the majority of junior faculty, written student evaluations of teaching have become what they describe as "a numbers game." They use items which produce responses in the form of numbers; they save the numbers to give administrators even though they're not at all certain as to what number represents saisfactory performance or exactly how they're used. The process becomes a game played, not for the purpose of making

things better, but rather as a means to an end--the end being promotion and/or tenure. It was, therefore, concluded that most junior faculty will compromise the personal and organizational purpose of ongoing improvement and development for the practical requirements surrounding the promotion and tenure process.

Finally, the users of rating items were least likely to discuss their student evaluation results with anyone else; whereas, the users of descriptive items often reported including a colleague when reviewing the results. One explanation for this is that rating items tend to focus on in-class teacher behaviors, while descriptive items focus on course activities and structure. It was concluded that descriptive formats produce information that is less personalized and therefore it may be less threatening for faculty to discuss the results.

Departmental Performance Evaluation Practices

With the exception of one department of the eleven represented in the sample, faculty perceive departmental performance evaluation activities as directed exclusively toward salary, promotion and tenure decisions. For the most part, they do not perceive department chairs or colleauges as being interested or involved in assessing and critiquing instructional performance for the purpose of simply improving and developing instructional practices. This perception appears to significantly, and understandably, influence a faculty member's willingness and desire to ask for outside review. Approximately two-thirds of the faculty participated in no ongoing formal assessment of their teaching/courses for the intended purpose of improvement/development. For the one-third who did participate

in such assessments, the process was limited to self-initiated written student evaluations of teaching/courses.

Faculty view their annual reviews as either procedural or focusing on research activities, and they interpret this as another indication of the institutional and external rewards. Even when the junior faculty did receive feedback annually, they reported it as focusing on research and as so general in nature that it contributed little, if anything, to improving performance. One assistant professor said:

> After I turned in my annual report, I got a note back from my chair saying: "Keep up the good work and get that research published." I felt good about it until I found out he wrote the identical note on all the assistant professors' reports. (f03)

Faculty interpret these departmental practices as meaning that teaching is not very important overall. Research accomplishments pay the most, and so they often feel a need to focus on research activities while maintaining some degree of "satisfactory" teaching performance, rather than setting instructional excellence as a goal.

The faculty frequently and intensely referred to these organizational conditions and their relationship to faculty's instructional improvement and development efforts. Their comments suggest that the long-time claim that "faculty are intrinsically rather than extrinsically" motivated is highly questionable. These faculty appear to be extremely sensitive and responsive to the university's reward system. An example of the effect this reward system is having on faculty attitudes and behavior is illustrated in the comments of an associate

professor:

> My attitude has changed since I came here seven years ago. Prior to coming here I always wanted to be at the university. I found out the job was 75% teaching and 25% research. I always wanted to teach, although I had never done it. I thought: This is great. I'm going to get to do both research and teaching. Well, since I've been here, I'd just prefer to get rid of the teaching. It interferes with the things that bring the reinforcers. People don't ask me about my teaching--they ask about my research. When I have those two quarters I have to teach, I am locked in. I put too much time into it and it hurts my research program tremendously. I'm not able to stay up on proposals and the development of proposals and writing manuscripts. If I could reduce my teaching responsbility, I'd do it right away.
>
> Don't misunderstand. I love teaching. If the university could convince me that they were sincere when they said, "we're going to make a serious evaluation of you as a teacher, and you're going to be rewarded for teaching"--they haven't done that up to now--I think it would be one of the greatest boons to this university that we have. (f25)

Current performance feedback practices as perceived by faculty are not only inadequate--they are also unfair. By the time a promotion and tenure review occurs, it is too late for the person to make any changes. However, it's difficult to understand how an individual can be held responsible for unsatisfactory performance when the standards for performance are undefined, and purposeful organizational support for performance improvement and development is almost non-existent.

One of the faculty participants was an assistant professor to whom promotion and tenure had initially been denied. His story and point of view clearly expresses this dilemma.

> On a Monday I was told I would be terminated as of July. Thursday of that week I was notified that I would get a merit pay increase. Fired on monday

and getting a merit pay increase on Thursday. I had five years of annual reviews that never indicated any problem at all. I talked to the Dean and said: "Let me give you an analogy. It's as if I signed up for a course and a TA was teaching the course. I got As all the way through and got extra credit. At the end of the quarter the TA gave the information to the professor to assign the grade and I flunked." I said, "How can you go along getting As and flunk the course?" (f17)

University Instructional Arrangements

Faculty appear to feel a sense of impotency toward making instructional improvements that go beyond their own courses. They are evidently seldom, if ever, consulted about their opinions regarding university instructional arrangements.

> When we teach in the branches we teach two days a week. I go with no break. I finish up in two hours. I can cover more material, easier in those two days than I can in my classes that meet every day. But I don't think it is easier on the student. Two hours is a lot of time to ask a student to absorb a bunch of garbage. It's a lot easier to teach, but it's not best for learning.
>
> Q: Do you talk about those things? How instruction is organized, what is feasible to change?
> A: No, because I think we feel that is pretty much out of our control. I've given up. It's not important. The mountain has been here so long. I don't know where to start. If someone from the Provost's Office saw the light, we might accomplish something. (f44)

Certainly the size and complexity of a multiversity makes it difficult to communicate effectively and constructively about the problems and possible solutions to providing mass education through arrangements that support learning. However, university-level instructional arrangements, such as class sizes, times, physical locations, etc., can either enhance or limit the ability of individual faculty to provide quality instruction. These

broader instructional arrangements, as well as individual courses and programs, need to continuously be examined and critiqued.

Informal "Norms"

There are several informal norms operating within the department and university which discourage ongoing, constructive critique of instructional practices. Some of these include:

- The perception that other faculty would consider it an intrusion into their rightful domain if a colleague wanted to review his or her instruction;
- Faculty not only have little formal involvement in each other's instruction, they have little informal interaction as well; and
- The belief that it is the chair's responsibility to deal with instructional problems--not the responsibility of the faculty.

These perceived norms are, however, contrary to the ways the majority of the faculty say they would like things to be:

> I'd like to see more people in the classroom.(f06)
>
> We should be more active in helping the people who are starting out....They should have a discussion of what's happening in the courses...It should be an ongoing thing. (f22)
>
> There is no defensible reason why you would not do peer review [of teaching]...If we can subject our written [research] work, I can't understand why we can't subject our teaching to a like kind of system...I don't know why we can't have people who are willing to look at a very detailed parallel between what we do for research and what we do for teaching. I know they aren't the same, but there are some generalizations that I'm sure will carry over. (f27)

It is our interpretation that, beside the realities of the reward system, one of the main reasons these kinds of colleague critiques don't happen is that faculty have learned to view anything called "review," "evaluation," or "critique" as

something that is done to them rather than with them and for them. They have so infrequently experienced these activities as being directed toward improvement and development that they are, rightfully, hesitant to allow their performance to be viewed by others.

Bridging the Gap

It has long been pointed out that, until teaching is rewarded within the multiversity, we cannot expect faculty to seriously examine and improve it. A recent report from the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in Higher Education (1984) has yet again restated this position. They offered, among others, the following conditions as necessary for improving the support of teaching in U.S. colleges and universities.

- An institutional reward system that emphasizes effective teaching in faculty personnel decisions such as hiring, retention, tenure, promotion, and compensation;
- A multidimensional approach for evaluating college teaching and for helping faculty improve teaching that involves students, colleagues, administrators, and consultants who use a variety of methods and criteria in assessing instructional quality; and
- An environment that reinforces the commitment of faculty to teaching through contributions to the literature on college instruction and student development, proceedings of the teaching divisions of professional societies and higher education associations, and the development of significant courses, curricula, and instructional materials such as textbooks and software.

In addition, we would like to offer the following ways that universities could demonstrate their commitment to quality instruction and its value as a performance activity.

- Accept a responsibility for providing faculty the opportunities to improve and develop as college teachers before subjecting them to a summative performance review;

- Fund, support and encourage the ongoing critique of instruction-related activities at the department and individual course level, with assurances that these processes would be treated separately from summative performance reviews; and

- Invite faculty to cooperate in critiquing and improving instructional arrangements in the university.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings and interpretations of this study suggest the following implications for instructional evaluation practices leading to improvement.

1. If universities are serious about the importance of teaching and its improvement, then faculty must believe that effective teaching will be rewarded and that it will be considered in personnel decisions in some reasonable balance with research accomplishments. Without this kind of institutional commitment, faculty are more likely to channel their efforts to other than teaching pursuits. In short, the rhetoric of teaching excellence and the realities of personnel decisions need to be congruent if faculty are to have confidence that teaching really counts.

2. Clearly, personnel evaluations should not be confused with instructional development and improvement activities. It is highly unlikely, for example, that any one student evaluation of teaching instrument, can serve both purposes equally well at the same time. The faculty member is in conflict if he or she is being assessed in a performance review on the basis of information that was collected for the purpose of assessing or diagnosing instruction for improvement purposes. The one purpose leads toward selecting items and asking questions that will provide a favorable response; the other purpose seeks to identify weaknesses and possiblities for change leading to improvement. Those responsible for student evaluation of teaching programs, and faculty development and evaluation programs need to be clear about the purpose for which the program is designed.

Likewise, if colleagues are to contribute useful feedback for instructional improvement, it is necessary that a trusting, confidential relationship be developed such that the faculty member receiving help will not find that "diagnostic" information is used against himself or herself later. Departments, colleges, and university administrations should consider the conditions under which both kinds of evaluations can be developed and implemented, i.e., those to support personnel decisions and those to support instructional development/improvement.

3. Department chairs, in particular, could play a significant role in creating conditions for the effective use of instructional feedback for improving and developing instruction. Department chairs influence teaching through such actions as faculty assignments, annual reviews, salary increases, committee assignments, and recommendations for promotion and tenure. By stimulating faculty discussions and constructive critiques of instruction-related activities, and by arranging the environment for frequent informal interactions with colleagues, chairs could communicate their interest and support for teaching. They could also play a valuable role in the development of clear statements of criteria, evidence and standards for quality teaching performance.

4. Mentoring systems, teaching effectiveness/development committees, and distinguished professors of teaching who work as teaching consultants are additional ways that instructional improvement assistance might be provided to faculty. Team-teaching arrangements and course exams constructed by several

faculty who teach the same course during different offerings are other ways to encourage colleague involvement in teaching.

5. Faculty and instructional development centers could also have a significant role in supporting instructional quality through improvement and development activities. These activities could range from individual consultation for improving teaching behavior to the development and use of tests, course and instructor evaluations, content organization, course objectives and curriculum design, and the use of various technological resources for delivering instruction.

Under most current conditions, only a small portion of faculty, notably those most talented and interested in teaching, make use of these services. The fact is that most of these centers are not and never could be large or diverse enough to work individually with all of the faculty in a university. Means must be established to join the resources of faculty/instructional development centers with those of the colleges and departments so that instructional improvement activities can be established and supported at the department level. Assistance from university-wide centers should be used to supplement resources at the department level. One form of this supplementary assistance could be a competitive grants program for instructional improvement. Research and development proposals for external funding also could be written cooperatively. Joint appointments, along with coordinated planning and budgeting activities (with colleges, departments, and other academic support units) are other ways in which potential contributions of such centers could be realized.

VII. FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study raise, among others, the following questions as a basis for future related research activities:

1. Do the instructional feedback performances reported by these faculty represent the practices of faculty in other colleges with muliversities?

2. What are the actual effects of the organizational reward system on faculty instructional performance, both short-term and long-term?

3. What personal characteristics are associated with a faculty member's tendency to continuously change and improve instruction?

4. What particular instructional changes result from particular kinds of feedback? Under what conditions does particular feedback result in particular kinds of instructional changes? For what reasons is negative feedback not used to make instructional changes? Do instructional changes made as a result of feedback actually result in improved instruction?

5. What departmental, college, and university conditions contribute to the ability and tendency of chairs and colleagues to contribute to the improvement of individual instructors and the courses they teach? What strategies are currently used to improve colleague and chair contributions to instructional development?

6. What is the impact of various university policies and patterns of organization on effective teaching? Factors to be considered in such inquiries might include: teaching arrangements (classes, class size, multi-sections with TAs, etc.), requirements

for student evaluation of teaching, requirements for peer review of teaching, funding formulas for student credit and contact hours, and relationships among committees for curriculum review, program review, promotion and tenure reviews, and other reviews which potentially contribute information for the improvement of courses, instructors, and programs.

7. What are the similarities and differences of data collected and findings resulting from quantitative and qualitative studies of instructional evaluation practices, and what are appropriate procedures for conducting a "meta-analysis" of qualitative studies?

8. Would longitudinal studies of faculty evaluation practices identify differences in their practices at different stages of their professional life? If so, what are the factors that contribute to such changes?

9. How might further research be designed to stimulate faculty inquiries on their own teaching and courses, and to serve as a component in a program for instructional faculty development?

VIII. EPILOGUE

Instructional performances that are commonly cited as necessary for effective learning include: motivating students to become more involved in their learning and in the university as a community, stating clear expectations and standards for performance, and providing regular assessments and feedback for improving performance. A parallel set of enabling goals could also be cited for effective teaching.

- We want to develop faculty who are motivated to become better instructors and to develop more effective courses;
- We want to develop faculty who have a clear understanding of the expectations and standards for quality teaching performance; and
- We want to develop faculty who seek, receive, and use regular assessments of their performance and feedback for teaching and course improvement.

If we are able to establish conditions which lead in these directions, the talents already available in most faculties will be more than adequate for making a significant contribution to the quality of university instruction and its impact on students.

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Appendix A

Faculty Background Sheet

Faculty Background Information

1. Courses which you taught this academic year:

   Course Number (s) Approximate Enrollment (s)

2. I am tenured: yes _____ no _____

3. Number of years as a college teacher: _____

4. Number of years at OSU: _____

5. The academic discipline from which you received your undergraduate degree: _____

6. The academic discipline (s) from which you received your graduate degree (s), including Masters and Doctorate:

   _____

   _____

7. Please indicate, by percentages, the approximate amount of your time spent in each of five university activity areas during this past academic year:

Instruction	____%
Research	____%
Public Service	____%
Administration	____%
Student Advising	____%
Total	100%

Appendix B

Definitions of Codes Used for Organizing Faculty Interview Data

.x01 Student Evaluations:types of

-type(s) of student evaluations the faculty member reportedly currently uses.

.x02 Informal feedback

-comments which describe casual, unofficial ways information is collected and/or used to make evaluative judgements about instructional practices.

The opposite of informal feedback--formal feedback--would be processes which use validated instruments and/or other means through which verifiable , empirical evidence about instructional practices is purposefully collected and used for the purpose of making evaluative judgements about instructional practices.

.x03 Peer review

-comments on means through which other faculty do, or could, critique, observe, or otherwise provide input to the faculty member or others about the participating faculty member's instructional practices.

.x04 Chair review

-comments on process(es) through which the faculty member's department chair does, or could, critique, observe or otherwise comment on the facultys' instructional practices.

.x06 Reasons for using the Cornell

-If a faculty member reportedly uses the Cornell instrument, his or her self-reported rationale for using same.

.x07 Negative SET comments

-comments made about the SET that could be interpreted as negative, i.e., disadvantages, problems, etc.

.x08 Changes

-comments describing actual changes in instructional practices that faculty have made and their perceived reasons for making such changes. ('Instructional practices' includes such things as teaching style, content covered, tests, course sequence, etc.)

.x11 Analysis of Student Evaluations: procedure

-comments which describe the process through which the faculty member analyzes formal student evaluations of teaching.

.x12 Exit Interviews

-comments which refer to exit interviews as a source of evaluative information.

.x13 Performance Standards

-comments related to the percieved standards, criteria and/or clarity of expectations for acceptable performance within the university and/or individual departments.

.x14 Attitude toward teaching

-comments which might be interpreted as reflecting or revealing a particular faculty member's attitude toward or philosophy of teaching.

.x16 Weight given teaching

-comments related to the perceived relative weight given to teaching performance during promotion, tenure and/or salary decisions. Perceived value placed on teaching role by university, college, department and/or others.

.x18 Evidence for P&T

-comments related to evidence about performance that the faculty member either included in his or her P&T packet or reportedly witnessed as included in the packets of others.

.x19 Faculty development

-comments which describe activities in which the faculty member or others have, or could, be involved for the purpose of acquiring or improving teaching skills.

.x20 Rewards

-comments which referred specifically to "rewards" associated with teaching and which reveal facultys' held beliefs about internal versus external rewards for teaching.

.x21 Administrators' influence on faculty attitudes toward teaching

-comments related to the relationship between formal and informal administrative policy and faculty attitudes and behavior regarding teaching.

.x23 Assignments

-comments related to faculty "work" assignments.

.x25 Pattern of use

-comments which describe the faculty member's and or departments' use of student evaluations over time.

.x27 Reasons for using SETs

-if a faculty member reportedly uses SETs, his or her self-reported rationale for using same.

.x28 Misc. Instructional Evaluation

-comments describing means used to evaluate instructional practices other than those processes described under .x01, .x02,

.x30 Curriculum Development

-comments which describe the process(es) through which courses are designed and developed, i.e., comments about who decides, and/or approves, and/or reviews subject matter, materials, testing procedures and policy, and the process(es) through and frequency with which those decisions are addressed.

.x31 Reasons for using student evaluations

-comments which provide espoused rationales for conducting written student evaluations--rationales not listed under .x06 or

.x32 Alumni

-comments that refer to using alumni as a source of evaluative information about instructional practices.

.x33 Recommendations

-comments which recommend changes in current instructional evaluation practices.

.x34 Attitude toward student evaluations

-comments which reflect faculty attitudes toward using students as a source of evaluative information about instructional practices.

.x35 P&T Process:feedback

-comments which refer to how faculty are provided performance information, and/or status reports about P&T actions, through the P&T process.

.x36 P&T Process:documentation

-comments referring to the packets of information about faculty performance which are compiled for use during the P&T process.

.x37 Aspects of Instruction to focus on

-facultys' descriptions of types of questions they ask students to respond to during course evaluations; the instructional factors about which they are reportedly interested in soliciting feedback.

.x38 Negative Cornell

-comments about the Cornell Diagnostic Instrument that could be interpreted as negative, i.e., disadvantages, problems, etc.

.x39 Accreditation Reviews

-comments referring to reviews conducted by external accrediting bodies.

.x40 Changes in P&T Process

-perceived changes in the university's and/or department's promotion and tenure process.

.x41 Policy

-comments referring or related to university and/or department policy regarding conducting student evaluations of teaching.

.x42 Student evaluations:actual use

-comments which describe or relate to how, for what purpose, and by whom the information collected through written student evaluations is actually used.

.x43 Annual Reviews

-comments describing the annual review process as, or if, practiced in departments and its relationship to evaluating instructional practices.

.x45 Written Comments

-comments describing the use and perceived value of students' written comments about instructional practice(s).

.x46 Weight given public service

-comments related to the perceived relative weight given to public service role during promotion, tenure and/or salary decisions. Perceived value placed on public service role by university, college, department and/or others.

.x49 University Program Review

-comments referring to the university's formal academic program review process.

Appendix C

Sample Page of Computer Printout for Organized Text Categories

Line Nos.	Text	Coding
3.	.X01 STUDENT EVALUATIONS:TYPES OF	.01 F01 0731 119
4.		.01 F01 0731 119
5.	I ALWAYS CONDUCT STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF MY	.01 F01 0731 119
6.	COURSE. I HAVE MY OWN FORM. I HAVE MY 4	.01 F01 0731 119
7.	STANDARD QUESTIONS THAT I ASK: WHAT DO YOU	.01 F01 0731 119
8.	LIKE BEST ABOUT THE COURSE? WHAT DO YOU LIKE	.01 F01 0731 119
9.	LEAST ABOUT THE COURSE? WHAT SUBJECT IS	.01 F01 0731 119
10.	THERE THAT I COVERED THAT I SHOULD NOT HAVE	.01 F01 0731 119
11.	COVERED? WHAT SUBJECT AREAS DID I NOT COVER	.01 F01 0731 119
12.	THAT I SHOULD HAVE? I'VE USED THOSE	.01 F01 0731 119
13.	QUESTIONS OVER THE LAST 7 OR 8 YEARS. FOR	.01 F01 0731 119
14.	TWO OR THREE YEARS THERE WAS A FAIRLY	.01 F01 0731 119
15.	STANDARD UNIVERSITY FORM THAT I USED---AT	.01 F01 0731 119
16.	LEAST MACHINE GRADED. I USED THAT FOR ABOUT	.01 F01 0731 119
17.	3 YEARS. THAT SEEMED TO HAVE DISAPPEARED.	.01 F01 0731 119
18.	AND I TOOK A LOOK AT THE CORNELL FORM, AND I	.01 F01 0731 119
19.	DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR MY	.01 F01 0731 119
20.	COURSES. I'MNOT SURE IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR	.01 F01 0731 119
21.	ANYBODY'S COURSES.	.01 F01 0731 119
22.		.01 F01 0731 119
23.		.01 F01 0731 119
360.	.X01 STUDENT EVALUATIONS:TYPES OF	.01 F02 0631 050
361.		.01 F02 0631 050
362.	I'VE GENERALLY USED THE CORNELL. ON OCCASION	.01 F02 0631 050
363.	IF I DON'T MEET DEADLINES SOMETIMES I'VE MADE	.01 F02 0631 050
364.	UP ONE OF MY OWN.	.01 F02 0631 050
365.		.01 F02 0631 050
904.	.X01 STUDENT EVALUATIONS:TYPES OF	.01 F03 0112 126
905.		.01 F03 0112 126
906.	USE THE CORNELL AND ONE OF MY OWN FOR EACH	.01 F03 0112 126
907.	COURSE. USE A VERY DETAILED, DETAILED,	.01 F03 0112 126
908.	SELF-DESIGNED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COURSE I'M	.01 F03 0112 126
909.	DEVELOPING.	.01 F03 0112 126
910.		.01 F03 0112 126
1039.	.X01 STUDENT EVALUATIONS:TYPES OF	.01 F03 0112 126
1040.		.01 F03 0112 126
1041.	THE FIRST TIME I TAUGHT ----- I USED A RATHER	.01 F03 0112 126
1042.	ELABORATE FORM. I ACTUALLY HAD THE	.01 F03 0112 126
1043.	INFORMATION KEY PUNCHED AND DID A STATISTICAL	.01 F03 0112 126
1044.	ANALYSIS. I GOT THE QUESTIONS FORMY OWN FORM	.01 F03 0112 126
1045.	PARTLY FROM AN INSTRUCTOR WHO HAD BEEN	.01 F03 0112 126
1046.	TEACHING THE COURSE FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS AND I	.01 F03 0112 126
1047.	WANTED TOCONTINUE TO ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS	.01 F03 0112 126
1048.	AND SOME FROM OTHER SOURCES.	.01 F03 0112 126
1049.		.01 F03 0112 126
1578.	.X01 STUDENT EVALUATION:TYPES OF	.01 F04 0421 018
1579.		.01 F04 0421 018
1580.	WE USE A SET FORM THAT WAS PUT TOGETHER BY	.01 F04 0421 018
1581.	THE DEPARTMENT. WE ALL USE THE SAME ITEMS.	.01 F04 0421 018
1582.	A GRADUATE STUDENT COMES IN TO ADMINISTER IT.	.01 F04 0421 018
1583.		.01 F04 0421 018
1584.		.01 F04 0421 018
1585.	A: AS FAR AS STUDENT COMMENTS THAT THEY	.01 F04 0421 018
1586.	PROVIDE, DID YOU SAY THAT FREQUENTLY STUDENTS	.01 F04 0421 018
1587.	COMMENT ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM--THE DEPART.	.01 F04 0421 018
1588.	SET FORM? A: YES, THEY FREQUENTLY DO. THE	.01 F04 0421 018
1589.	TAS WILL ADMINISTER THE FORM. THE FORM WILL	.01 F04 0421 018
1590.	SAY THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO COMMENT--ENCOURAGE	.01 F04 0421 018
1591.	IT. Q: DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WHAT PERCENT MIGHT	.01 F04 0421 018

Appendix D

A Listing of Specific Artificial Feedback Mechanisms

Used by Each Faculty Member in the Sample

Artificial Feedback Mechanisms

Faculty Participants	Promotion and tenure reviews	Written student evaluations	Annual performance reviews	Analysis of student performance on tests	Departmental interviews/ surveys of graduating seniors	Discussions with individual faculty for purpose of critique	In-class Observations by peers (Planned, resulting in a written report)	Curriculum review committees	Group discussions with teaching faculty for purpose of critique	Individually requested review of teaching materials	Discussions with individual students or groups of students for purpose of course critique	Consultation with a teaching improvement consultant	Faculty development committee	Colleague rating form
f01	x													
f02	x	x			x							x		
f03	x	x	x	x				x						
f04	x	x	x			x				x				
f05	x	x												
f06	x	x				x	x							
f08	x	x												
f10	x	x								x				
f11	x	x	x				x	x						
f12	x													
f13	x	x	x		x									
f14	x													
f15	x			x										
f16	x	x			x									
f17	x	x	x		x									
f18	x				x									
f19	x													
f20	x	x	x	x										
f21	x	x	x	x		x								
f22	x	x	x						x					
f23	x	x												
f24	x	x		x		x	x							
f25	x	x								x				
f26	x	x	x	x									x	
f27	x	x	x	x	x		x				x		x	
f...	x	x		x		x								
f29	x	x			x				x					
f30	x	x									x			x
f31	x			x										
f32	x													
f34	x	x	x									x		
f35	x	x												
f36	x	x	x	x					x	x				
f37	x	x			x			x						
f38	x	x												
f39	x	x												
f40	x	x	x				x							
f41	x	x				x		x						
f42	x	x			x									
f44	x	x							x					
f45	x	x			x									